

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2016

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MU

SUBJECT: CABINET CHANGES ANNOUNCED

1. ON APRIL 11, NUMBER OF CABINET CHANGES WERE ANNOUNCED.

ASSIM AL JAMALI (MINISTER OF HEALTH UNTIL NOVEMBER 1974, AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO SINCE THAT TIME) IS TO REPLACE SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN AHMED AT RE-TITLED (AND PERHAPS EXPANDED) MINISTRY OF LAND AND MUNICIPALITY AFFAIRS. MOHAMMAD BIN AHMED, IN TURN, BECOMES MINISTER OF INTERIOR, REPLACING QABOOS' UNCLE, SAYYID FAHER BIN TAIMUR. SAYYID FAHER RETAINS HIS POSITION AS DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND IS ALSO NAMED TO BE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS, A NEWLY-CREATED POSITION. SAYYID FAISAL BIN ALI LEAVES MINISTRY OF EDUCATION TO BECOME MINISTER FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE--ANOTHER NEW POSITION. ONLY NEW FACE IS THAT OF AHMAD ABDULLAH AL GHAZALI, NAMED TO SUCCEED SAYYID FAISAL AS MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

-) &#-"-)8 (SON OF FOMIN CHIEF OF PROTOCOL ABDULLAH SALIM AL GHAZALI) FORMERLY WAS INSPECTOR OF EDUCATION FROM SHARQIYYIA DISTRICT (BASED IN SUR). HE IS IMPRESSIVE, DEDICATED YOUNG MAN, AND EMBASSY WILL PROCEED WITH EARLIER PLANS TO ADD HIM TO OUR PLBRL.

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2. COMMENT: CABINET CHANGES HAD BEEN IN OFFING FOR SOMET TIME. EVEN BEFORE LAST CHANGES IN NOV-EMBER 1974, THERE WERE EFFORTS TO REMOVE SAYYID FAISAL FROM THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. PRESENT "SOLUTION" FOLLOWS EARLIER PATTERN OF EXPANDING CABINET WITH RELATIVELY MEANINGLESS POSITIONS RATHER THAN GOING ALL THE WAY DEFINITELY TO REMOVE FORMER MINISTERS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY THE CASE WITH SAYYID FAISAL WHO, AS MEMBER OF ROYAL FAMILY, SEEMS TO HAVE RESISTED HIS OUSTER FROM MINED WITH GREATER VIGOR THAN HE PURSUED HIS MINISTERIAL FUNCTIONS. ALLEGEDLY, MOHAMMAD BIN AHMED SHIFTED FROM LAND AFFAIRS BECAUSE OF CORRUPTION AND REAL ESTATE SCANDALS. AL JAMALI IS APT TO BE BETTER ADMINISTRATOR, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY A CLEANSING AGENT, IN THAT MINISTRY. EMBASSY SEES NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE IN SAYYID FAHER'S RELINQUISHMENT OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR PORTFOLIO; FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, HE FOUND THIS TO BE ONEROUS DUTY AT BEST.

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